

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 2-13 and 15-16 are pending in the application. By this amendment, claim 15 has been amended and claim 16 has been canceled.

Applicants' Representatives thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview on January 5, 2010, where proposed claims were discussed with the Examiner in view of the cited prior art. Specifically, proposed amendments, which are now present in independent claim 15, were presented and discussed relative to the prior art. It was agreed by the Examiner that if these amendments were made, the claims would overcome the rejections in the current Office Action.

Applicants believe the amendments made herein add no new matter. Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to be attached thereto.

Reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(B)

Claims 2-6 and 15-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by European Patent Application No. 1096051 (EP '051). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 16 has been canceled; therefore, the rejection with respect to this claim is moot.

Based on the interview, it is believed that amended claim 15 defines over the prior art of record. Therefore, it is believed that no further argument is warranted. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection, and the allowance of claim 15.

Claims 2-6 depend from independent claim 15. In light of the allowability of independent claim 15, the rejection of claims 2-6 is moot in light of their dependency on an allowable base claim. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection, and the allowance of claims 2-6.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over '051 in view of EP1156318. The rejection is traversed.

Based on the interview, it is believed that amended claim 15 defines over the prior art of record. Claim 8 depends from independent claim 15. In light of the allowability of independent claim 15, the rejection of claim 8 is moot in light of its dependency on an allowable base claim. Therefore, it is believed that no further argument is warranted. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection, and the allowance of claim 8.

Claims 7, 9, and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over '051 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,536 to Severns. The rejection is traversed.

Based on the interview, it is believed that amended claim 15 defines over the prior art of record. Claims 7, 9, and 11-13 depend from independent claim 15. In light of the allowability of independent claim 15, the rejection of claims 7, 9, and 11-13 is moot in light of their dependency on an allowable base claim. Therefore, it is believed that no further argument is warranted. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection, and the allowance of claims 7, 9, and 11-13.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over '051 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,691,536 to Severns and further in view of DE19821148. The rejection is traversed.

Based on the interview, it is believed that amended claim 15 defines over the prior art of record. Claim 10 depends from independent claim 15. In light of the allowability of independent claim 15, the rejection of claim 10 is moot in light of its dependency on an allowable base claim. Therefore, it is believed that no further argument is warranted. Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection, and the allowance of claim 10.

Serial No. 10/595,382
Filed: April 13, 2006
Page 7 of 7

Examiner: Jason Mark Heckert
Group Art Unit: 1792

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all of the claims remaining in the application are allowable over the prior art of record. Nevertheless, Applicants are filing a Request for Continued Examination contemporaneously herewith pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.114. Prompt notification of allowability is respectfully requested. If there are any outstanding issues that the Examiner feels may be resolved by way of telephone conference, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned to resolve these issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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